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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 005868

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/27/2015

TAGS: PREL KPKO IN CG SU UNSC

SUBJECT: INDIAN PEACEKEEPERS: SUDAN READY TO GO, MAYBE MORE FOR CONGO?

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt, for reasons 1.4(B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Indian media reported on July 27 that a second Indian infantry brigade had been told to prepare to deploy to the UN peacekeeping operation (PKO) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). While MEA Under Secretary (UN Political) K Nandini told us that the MEA was

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unaware of any plans to add to the brigade already serving in the DRC, Indian Army contacts seemed to confirm to DATT the additional deployment. The GOI is also ready to send a brigade to southern Sudan under UN auspices, but has delayed the deployment due to rains in Sudan and the lack of infrastructure on the ground, especially for quarters and basing. MEA expects to receive notice from UN headquarters regarding the timing of the deployment and the finalization of a status of forces agreement to govern the PKO. End Summary.

Confusion in MEA about Troops for Congo

¶2. (SBU) The "Times of India" reported on July 27 that the GOI instructed the Army to prepare a second infantry brigade to join the 3,000 Indian soldiers serving in the UN PKO in the DRC. The total strength of 6,000 personnel would be India's largest ever UN PKO participation. MEA Under Secretary Nandini told Poloff on July 27 that MEA is unaware

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of any plans to add to the DRC mission, adding that India has not received any notification that the mandate for the UN PKO had been increased. However, MEA does expect the UN Security Council to mandate additional troops before elections, which had been delayed from October to sometime before the end of ¶2005.

¶3. (C) Although MEA was unaware of plans to send more troops, Maj Gen Sekhon (protect), the Deputy Director General of Military Training, when asked by DATT about an additional "battalion," clarified that it was in fact a brigade, and seemed to acknowledge the DRC deployment.

Waiting for the Green Light to go to Sudan

¶4. (SBU) Nandini characterized the separate planned deployment of 3,500 troops to Sudan as slow. The decision to negotiate a status of forces agreement between the UN and Sudan in theory solved earlier holdups over visas for the Indian soldiers, but the agreement is not yet done, Nandini said, adding that logistical difficulties now hamper the deployment. The monsoons in southern Sudan preclude moving the necessary equipment, and there is no infrastructure for basing the forces in the area. Nandini mentioned that the UN Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping had stated that deployment would be complete by October, but concluded, "we are still waiting for someone to tell us to deploy."

Comment: Highlighting the PKO Contribution

¶5. (SBU) It is unsurprising that plans for additional PKO deployments have hit the newspapers quickly. The GOI continues to trumpet its participation in UN PKOs both in public and in interactions with Emboffs. Clearly, India sees its historically strong contributions as one of its prime qualifications for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

¶6. (U) Minimize considered.
BLAKE